

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

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APPROVED BY ACTING SECRETARY

S/S - MR. GAMMON

NEA - MR. SISCO (DRAFT)

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USINT BAGHDAD IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT CAIRO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 139801

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, U.S., IZ

SUBJECT: IRAQ'S RELATIONS WITH WEST AFTER ABORTIVE COUP

REFERENCE: BAGHDAD 394 (NOTAL)

1. DEPARTMENT APPRECIATES YOUR SUGGESTION PER REFTEL THAT
USG SEEK TO TAKE OPPORTUNITY PRESENTED AFTER ABORTIVE
COUP ATTEMPT TO FOSTER BETTER U.S./IRAQI RELATIONS. RECENT
INTERVIEW GRANTED TO WESTERN JOURNALISTS BY REVOLUTIONARY
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COMMAND COUNCIL (RCC) VICE PRESIDENT SADDAM HUSSEIN, IN

WHICH HE STATES THAT IRAQ WOULD WELCOME BETTER RELATIONS WITH THE WEST AND SPECIFICALLY WITH US, IS SIGNIFICANT PUBLIC INDICATION OF IRAQI WILLINGNESS TO KEEP DOORS OPEN TO IMPROVED BILATERAL RELATIONS. HUSSEIN'S ARTICLE RECEIVED PROMINENT PRESS PLAY IN NEW YORK TIMES AND WASHINGTON POST JULY 15 EDITIONS AND HAS BEEN INTERPRETED BY PRESS AS INDICATION OF OPENING TOWARD THE WEST BY IRAQ'S LEADERSHIP (SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW FOLLOWS SEPTEL).

2. HOWEVER, WE THINK IT IS TOO EARLY TO DETERMINE EXACTLY WHAT CHANGES AND POLITICAL ORIENTATION, IF ANY, IRAQI REGIME WILL ADOPT IN AFTERMATH OF COUP ATTEMPT. GIVEN THE IN-FIGHTING OF THE RULING BA'ATH PARTY OF IRAQ (BPI) AND THE POLITICAL ANTAGONISMS WHICH CAN BE EXPECTED TO PREVAIL AS A RESULT OF THE ABORTIVE COUP, WE THINK IT WOULD BE

INOPPORTUNE FOR USG TO TAKE ANY IMMEDIATE INITIATIVES WHICH COULD BE MISINTERPRETED BY ONE OR ANOTHER FACTION OF THE BPI.

3. IN THIS RESPECT WE FEEL THAT A NATIONAL DAY MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT BAKR FROM PRESIDENT NIXON AS SUGGESTED REFTEL, WOULD BE OVERDOING IT AT THIS STAGE. HOWEVER, WE DO SEE MERIT IN SENDING A CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE ON BEHALF OF THE SECRETARY TO IRAQI FOREIGN MINISTER ABD AL-BAQI ON OCCASION NATIONAL DAYS CELEBRATIONS BETWEEN JULY 14 AND JULY 17 (MESSAGE CONTAINED SEPTEL). MESSAGES HAVE BEEN EXCHANGED BETWEEN SECRETARY AND FOREIGN MINISTER ON 'ID AL ADHA AND THIS LEVEL OF EXCHANGE WOULD BOTH BE IN LINE WITH RELATIONS WE ENJOY WITH GOI AT THIS TIME AND CONSTITUTE MODEST NEW SIGNAL OF INTEREST. WE DO NOT THINK THAT IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE TO INCLUDE CONDOLENCES ON DEATH OF GENERAL SHIHAB.

4. IN LAST ANALYSIS, WE THINK WE SHOULD CONTINUE FOR NOW TO REMAIN AS ALOOF AS POSSIBLE FROM IRAQ'S INTERNAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS AND CONCENTRATE ON IMPROVING OUR RELATIONS AT THE ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL AND CULTURAL LEVELS WHERE GRADUAL BUT TANGIBLE PROGRESS IS BEING MADE. OUR BASIC POSITION IS THAT WE WOULD WELCOME AN IMPROVEMENT IN OUR CONFIDENTIAL

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RELATIONS WITH IRAQ AND WOULD CERTAINLY WELCOME THE RESUMPTION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THOSE COUNTRIES WHICH SEVERED RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES AFTER THE JUNE 1967 WAR.

5. WE ARE CONSIDERING WHAT FURTHER SIGNALS WE MIGHT GIVE RESPONSIVE TO SADDAM HUSSEIN INTERVIEW AND WOULD WELCOME YOUR THOUGHTS AS WELL AS THOSE OF INFO ADDRESSEES

AS APPROPRIATE. RUSH

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